

CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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The Fire Alarm Goes Off – WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO??

State Fire Marshal's Office Urges IMMEDIATE RESPONSE to Fire/ Emergency Alarms

Sacramento – The fire alarm sounds! Or, a warning to evacuate is broadcast throughout your building! “Oh no,” you say, “another false alarm.” Are you going to finish your task, your chapter, or your shopping, waiting for the actual smell of smoke? Or are you going to safely GET OUT OF THE BUILDING? What are **YOU** going to do?

The Office of the State Fire Marshal urges that you immediately **HEED THE ALARM** and **EVACUATE THE BUILDING**. “Alarms save lives. Always presume that the alarm went off for a reason. Don’t panic, but don’t delay either. Get out immediately,” says State Fire Marshal, John Tennant.

“The events of September 11, 2001 should serve as a warning to us,” adds Fire Marshal Tennant. “Although thousands of people were killed, many more thousands are alive today because they quickly evacuated their building. This is National Fire Prevention Week, and I encourage all Californians to give some thought to their own emergency escape plan. And, make a commitment to heed evacuation warnings. If the alarm sounds, get out!”

Chief Tennant acknowledges that people can become complacent because of false alarms. “Sometimes alarms malfunction or some people deliberately set false alarms. Still, it is better to react. Get everybody to safety first, then determine if the danger is real.

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Chief Tennant stresses that it is important to assure that alarm systems are in good working order. And regarding those false alarms; “Setting a false fire alarm is a felony. It is punishable by imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000. We take them very seriously.”

Our message is three fold, adds Chief Tennant.

- 1) To building managers/owners and tenants- Make sure that your alarms are in good working order and that the occupants of the building respect their call to evacuate.
- 2) To those who set false alarms- DON'T! At the least your actions are illegal and could land you in jail. At worst, someone could die because of your prank.
- 3) To all other Californians- Make safety a priority. Whether you are at work or at home, you should have an emergency evacuation plan. You should know at least two ways to get out of your building. Pay attention to the location of fire equipment and alarm devices. When the alarm sounds, leave the building immediately, even if someone else says it is a false alarm.

“Today I am asking the citizens of California to ‘get serious’ about their own safety and security. Make sure that alarm system(s) in your building work properly. Insist that they do. Turn in the pranksters and testify against them. Know how to exit your building safely, and develop a Home Escape Plan for your family. And, most important, **HEED THE ALARM**”.

Further safety information, as well as guidelines for the development of Evacuation Plans may be obtained on the Fire Marshal’s website at www.fire.ca.gov

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